

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

September 27 at 6:30 p.m.
Department of Administration

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

TAC members present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Michael Bliss representing Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe
Ms. Meridith Brady representing Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Alan Brodd	Town of Cumberland
Mr. Russ Chateauneuf	RI Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Elaine Colarusso	Town of East Greenwich
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. David Everett representing Mr. Robert Azar	City of Providence
Mr. George Monaghan	RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)
Mr. Daniel Porter	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Mr. Mark Therrien	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation

TAC members absent

Mr. Dan Boudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member
Ms. Pam Sherrill	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and Towns

Others in attendance

Mr. Corey Bobba	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Mr. Grant Dulgarian	Ecology Action for RI
Ms. Eugenia Marks	Audubon Society/ Coalition for Transportation Choices

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Mr. Jared Rhodes	Chief
Ms. Karen Scott	Assistant Chief
Ms. Linsey Callaghan	Supervising Planner
Ms. Ronnie Sirota	Principal Planner

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Ms. Shocket welcomed Mr. Michael Bliss who will be an alternate to Ms. Dinalyn Spears in representing the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Ms. Shocket also welcomed Mr. Corey Bobba who is representing FHWA.

Ms. Shocket also welcomed Ms. Karen Scott back from her maternity leave.

2. Approval of August 23, 2012 Meeting Minutes – *for action*

Mr. Schiller pointed out two suggested changes in the August 23, 2012 minutes. The minutes will be corrected as follows:

- Page 4, second to last paragraph of the Minutes, Mr. Schiller's statement should read as follows (correction is underlined): "Mr. Schiller asked if the public hearing could occur earlier than November 15th in order to allow the TAC more time to review the public document."
- Page 5, last paragraph, first sentence should read as follows: "Ms. Picchione further explained that the second grant was for the Eastside Bus Tunnel in Providence for \$820,000 (full amount with matching \$1,025,000)."

Upon motion of Mr. Walker to approve with revisions, seconded by Mr. Brodd, the August 23, 2012 meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public comment on the Agenda items.

4. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update

Ms. Callaghan presented the Long Range Plan 2035 Update. At the August TAC meeting, Ms. Callaghan discussed the need to proceed with a limited update to *Transportation 2030* in order to process TIP amendments and fully realize federal funds for transportation projects. She explained that in order to complete this task relatively quickly, Statewide Planning has been working with RIDOT, RIPTA, RIAC, and RIDEM, to develop the draft *Transportation 2035* which is included in this meeting's TAC packages. Ms. Callaghan would like to solicit TAC members' input and comments on the current draft. Ms. Callaghan noted that all of the changes have been highlighted in the document, which is provided in color in the emailed version. Also the maps and financial tables, including FTA Allocation of Funds, have been distributed for today's meeting.

Ms. Callaghan explained that under Part I, staff has updated factual information when possible, as well as updated the introduction, plan approval process, and scope of the update which has been summarized in the chart on Page 1-5 of *Transportation 2035*. The scope of the update chart establishes which sections were subject to either a full update, limited update, or would be subject to a future update. The rest of Part I updates include:

- 2010 Recertification Recommendations from FHWA & FTA
- Demographic Trends with updated 2010 Census data for population characteristics
- Travel Trends

Ms. Callaghan then highlighted some of the interesting travel trend figures including that 80 percent of work trips in Rhode Island were by single occupant vehicle. Ms. Callaghan continued that auto ownership continues to increase slowly, although growth has slowed compared with previous decades.

Over 53 percent of Rhode Island households own two or more vehicles, and this number has not changed since 2000. However auto ownership figures vary greatly by city and town. In Providence, 19 percent of households did not have access to a vehicle, while in some rural towns only 1 to 2 percent of households did not have a vehicle. In 2008 the number was 23 percent for Providence.

Ms. Callaghan then stated that the Statewide Travel Demand Model indicates that average trip length will increase slightly. This is due to continuing, but slowed, movement of the population to suburban and rural Rhode Island. Overall, the level of travel is not anticipated to change dramatically. There will be more travel, with individuals traveling somewhat further. Congestion and sprawling development patterns will cause travel to take longer, thereby increasing average travel times, and decreasing average vehicle speeds. Mr. Schiller asked if the total numbers of vehicles are decreasing. Ms. Callaghan responded that households are spreading out with less people per household. Ms. Scott added that some statistics on car ownership indicate pretty steady rates for vehicle ownership, however vehicle registration numbers have gone down slightly. Ms. Callaghan noted that these trends of increased congestion and traffic are what staff hopes to reverse through the implementation of *Land Use 2025* which focuses growth and redevelopment within the Urban Service Boundary.

Ms. Callaghan next explained Part 2, the Transportation System & Needs Assessment. She stated that the factual information that was available was updated. This included the following:

- Program funding amounts in the FY 2013-2016 TIP.
- Updated ridership and train frequency from MBTA and Amtrak at all of RI's rail stations.
- Updated information regarding commuter train service to Warwick and Wickford Junction.
- Limited Update on facilities inventory for bicycle, freight, intermodal, and aviation.

Staff did not update the Needs Assessment component, which according to guidance from FHWA will no longer be a desired component in Long Range Transportation Plans. The focus from FHWA will be performance based.

Mr. Walker made several comments regarding the following sections:

- Section 1-3 "summer/fall" should change to "fall" since all was done in the summer.
- Questioned the planning out year to 2035. Ms. Scott stated that even though this is a partial update we are able to extend the plan to 2035 and title the plan *Transportation 2035*.
- Asked if the planning guidance should be under MAP-21. Ms. Callaghan replied it still was under SAFETEA-LU since guidance for MAP-21 will take several months for USDOT to development and is currently unavailable.
- Questioned if the 2000 U.S. Census was a correct reference to the data used for the population projections. Ms. Callaghan replied yes, that 2000 U.S. Census figures were used for the population projections. Ms. Scott added that population projections are very involved and the projections based on 2010 U.S. Census data would not be ready for this plan.
- Stated that on Section 2-3 regarding the bridge in Pawtucket and Sakonnet, the weight restrictions are no longer in effect.

Mr. Schiller suggested that in Part 2, the rail ridership units to measure MBTA and Amtrak for passengers should use the same units. Ms. Scott replied staff could ask them if that could be done. Ms. Callaghan stated additional text comments can be sent to her.

Ms. Meredith Brady from RIDOT explained the Part 3, Transportation Financing Section. She stated some of the bridges will be transferred to the Rhode Island Bridge and Turnpike Authority but the change may not be negotiated until next spring. Ms. Brady continued that transportation financing will definitely be a challenge in the coming years because MAP-21 is currently only a two year bill that covers funding only until the end of 2014. Ms. Brady stated that there is not any information on what resources will be available after that time. Staff has started looking at what may be required for funding, the long range transportation plan, and the TIP under MAP-21 however currently staff needs to rely on SAFETEA-LU since federal guidance for MAP-21 is still not available. Therefore to predict the future funding picture, staff looked at what was actually adopted in the TIP and added a small amount for growth. The advanced construction section page 3-3 continues to fund the multi-year projects and GARVEE debt service payments will continue until 2027 even though the projects will be completed by 2016 or 2017. Ms. Brady stated that RIPTA completed an update to their portion of anticipated federal funding and added funding for the Providence street car project. The transportation rail finance section also had significant changes since service has now been extended to Wickford Junction with additional stations expected in the future. State funding resources are listed on page 3-8 and account for a gas tax increase of 2 cents and a table on page 3-10 regarding the shift from bond funds to new state funding sources for FY 2012 to FY 2018.

Ms. Callaghan then continued with Part 4, the Environmental Analysis. The updates included in this section include the environmental justice analysis and air quality analysis. Ms. Callaghan stated that for the environment justice analysis, in 2008 Statewide Planning conducted a benefits and burden analysis on environmental justice populations based upon 2000 U.S. Census data and select elements of the transportation system. As part of this update, the same analysis was employed using 2010 Census figures. This analysis found that a higher proportion of minorities and populations below the poverty level continue to live within the transportation system's major elements, interstates, however it is a smaller number. Also environmental justice populations continue to have greater access to transit than the state population as a whole with two-thirds of RIPTA's system serving minority neighborhoods, which is an increase from 2000. Based on this analysis, Ms. Callaghan stated we are making progress on our goals of Environmental Justice.

Ms. Callaghan stated that the air quality analysis was completed through the assistance of Statewide Planning's consultants VHB and coordination with RIDEM. Ms. Callaghan continued that the air quality analysis performed for *Transportation 2035* demonstrates compliance to the Rhode Island State Implementation Plan (SIP) with the mobile source emissions of ozone falling below the transportation budgets.

Ms. Callaghan stated that Part 5 – Recommendations which includes the Plan's goals, policies, objectives and strategies were left unchanged. Ms. Callaghan continued that staff feels that these basic principles put forward are still relevant to the State's transportation goals.

Ms. Callaghan continued that in Appendix A, the Congestion Management Process, which is under the guidance of the Congestion Management Task Force was subject to a limited update. The update included the recent activity regarding congestion management such as operational improvements, the collection of travel data and performance measures of congestion, congestion mapping, land management activities under the Access Management Task Force, and an update of facilities including Park n' Ride lots and commuter rail lots. The Congestion Management Task Force reviewed Appendix A at their September meeting. Ms. Callaghan also explained that a number of maps have been updated for *Transportation 2035*. Maps that were updated include 2010 U.S. Census data for demographic

populations, travel trends, congestion mapping, and the environmental justice analysis. All maps are included for review, including those completed for *Transportation 2030* and *2035*. Ms. Callaghan distributed the maps.

Ms. Callaghan asked if there were any questions. Mr. Therrien asked if notice or a summary for *Transportation 2035* was going to be translated into different languages. Ms. Callaghan stated staff is currently working to develop their goals for translation services under Title VI objects. Mr. Therrien suggested perhaps Statewide Planning could tie in with RIPTA's efforts.

Ms. Callaghan asked that if TAC members feel comfortable with the Long Range Transportation Plan draft that they recommend to the State Planning Council authorization of a public hearing. The Technical Committee will be asked to do the same at their meeting.

Ms. Callaghan next reviewed the *Transportation 2035* proposed schedule and the key dates moving forward which include:

- Technical Committee and State Planning Council review the draft at their October meetings and hopefully both will agree to authorize a Public Hearing.
- The advertisement for the public hearing is scheduled to appear in the Providence Journal on October 12th
- Notification of the plan and public hearings will also be mailed to Statewide Planning's over 1,500 people and agencies.
- The draft plan will be posted on Statewide Planning's website
- Statewide Planning will conduct two public hearings in November. The first hearing will be on November 14 at 9:00 am. The second hearing will be on November 15 at 6:30 and will constitute a special meeting of the TAC. At this meeting the TAC will be asked to recommend approval of *Transportation 2035* to the State Planning Council.
- If all proceeds smoothly, *Transportation 2035* will hopefully be before the State Planning Council at their December 13th meeting as a request for approval.

Mr. Therrien moved that the TAC recommend to the State Planning Council authorization of two public hearings in November on the Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. The TAC passed the motion unanimously.

Mr. Schiller asked when the next update to the long range transportation plan would be executed. Ms. Scott replied that the goal is to schedule the long range transportation plan and the TIP on different update years; therefore, a full long range transportation plan update will probably be in 2 ½ to 4 years, depending on the new MAP-21 guidance.

5. Staff Report

Ms. Callaghan stated that the State has a new Strategic Highway Safety Plan covering 2012 to 2016. The previous Plan was completed in 2007. The new Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a data-driven, strategic approach to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Rhode Island's roadways, and was a collaborative effort among all the safety stakeholders, including Federal, State, local, and private partners. The Governor will sign the Plan into effect on Monday, October 1. If the TAC is interested in learning more about the plan staff can ask Mr. Bob Rocchio or Mr. Steve Pristawa of RIDOT to give a presentation at a future TAC meeting.

Mr. Schiller commented that he would be interested in hearing more on the Highway Safety Plan. Ms. Callaghan stated the Plan included strategies to reduce fatalities and injuries including those related to alcohol use and seat belt use. Ms. Callaghan added that there will be a task force formed on distracted driving, as presently this is difficult to prove in the cause of an accident and to obtain data. Mr. Schiller commented that he assumes this includes strategies for pedestrian fatalities. Mr. Bobba of FHWA stated that pedestrians are included however, RIDOT is in the early stages to focus on the more vulnerable such as people, bikes, mopeds, etc.

Mr. Schiller asked about an update on the State Rail Plan. Ms. Callaghan answered that there will be a State Rail Plan Advisory Committee meeting on October 15th. Mr. Schiller stated that RIDOT convened a group of interested people to raise awareness of the commuter rail system. The environmental community has agreed to help distribute material and schedules regarding commuter rail service in Rhode Island.

6. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Shocket asked if there was any additional public comment.

Ms. Eugenia Marks of the RI Audubon Society and the Coalition for Transportation Choices commented on the *Transportation 2035* update. She indicated that on Page 5-6 the last sentence under "Pedestrian" would be better served if it reflected that under MAP-21, Safe Routes to School is eliminated for discrete funding. Ms. Marks added that Safe Routes to School funding will now be together with CMAQ funding under a category called Transportation Alternatives. She further noted that since safety for children traveling to school should be an important issue, she would like to see something indicated in *Transportation 2035* about the lack of funding for the program. Ms. Marks also commented that October 3rd is International Walk to School Day and 33 schools in Rhode Island have signed up to participate.

7. Other Business – for discussion

Mr. Therrien stated that RIPTA is in the midst of its Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) which is a review of where buses run, service frequency and bus hours of operation. Mr. Therrien continued that there is a survey for people who both ride and do not ride buses. Mr. Therrien said if anyone has a constituency who would like to be included in the survey, RIPTA will send them the description of the project. Ms. Scott said it will also be put in the Statewide Planning newsletter.

Mr. Schiller complemented Ms. Eugenia Marks on her hard work in publicizing the Safe Routes to School program. Fortunately, in the current TIP the program is funded for at least the next four years.

8. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Brodd, seconded by Mr. Bliss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Submitted By: Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner to Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary